

Lowell, Rebecca

From: Lowell, Rebecca
Sent: Friday, February 12, 2016 3:43 PM
To: Joan Penney; Hyde, Bob
Cc: Dan Mitzel; 'Paul Woodmansee'; charlie.guildner@peoplesbank-wa.com; 'jim vandermey'; Carl Young; 'John Mitzel'; genev@salemvillage.org; Tom Theisen; dnord@nordnw.com; Melanie Corey; Ragan, Dale; MVMayor
Subject: RE: Response

Joan and the HAATF members:

Thank you for the attached letter.

Following is a response to your letter. I've followed the same numbering format as your letter for ease of reference.

- 1) Thank you.
- 2) As staff there are absolutely no assurances that we can ever provide to anyone with regard to if or when our City Council will adopt changes to the City's development regulations. Our City Council adopts policy – not staff. As staff our role is to provide the best, most representative data that is possible to enable our Council to make informed decisions. Council has the role of taking staff's data, taking input from the entire community, and then making a decision that reflects the best interests of the City and its citizens.
 - With regard to your question about whether staff can “start with the end in mind and work backwards through the process?” Absolutely not – that is not our role and would be highly unethical. We present the facts, solicit comments from others and then our City Council makes those decisions. As staff we do not commence or partake in work programs without the express direction of our Council. Should Council direct staff to propose amendments to our zoning code will absolutely will – gladly, but we are directed first.
- 3) The City is required by State law, and our own code, to hold open record public hearings when adopting amendments to our Comprehensive Plan. Please rest assured that there will be hearings before our City Council and Planning Commission. My uncertainty is with regard to when the hearing(s) will occur – not if they will occur.
 - I do not set our City Council study session meetings so I am not able to speak to that item. I have, however, provided you with a schedule that includes the Housing Element. I would encourage you to attend and testify at those hearings.
 - If we find there is a need to schedule additional public hearings – for any element of the Comprehensive Plan - we will most certainly do that.

Thank you again,

Rebecca Bradley-Lowell
Senior Planner
Community & Economic Development Department
910 Cleveland Ave / P.O. Box 809
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
360.336.6214

From: Joan Penney [<mailto:jmpenney59@comcast.net>]

Sent: Friday, February 12, 2016 2:44 PM

To: Hyde, Bob; Lowell, Rebecca

Cc: Dan Mitzel; 'Paul Woodmansee'; charlie.guildner@peoplesbank-wa.com; 'jim vandermeij'; Carl Young; 'John Mitzel'; genev@salemvillage.org; Tom Theisen; dnord@nordnw.com; Melanie Corey; Ragan, Dale; MVMayor

Subject: Response

Greetings Bob and Rebecca-

Thank you for your email of February 5. Our response is attached.

Thanks for your time and I hope you enjoy your long weekend.

HAATF

February 12, 2016

Hello Rebecca and Bob:

HAATF has a few questions, observations and suggestions that we hope can be taken into consideration as we move through this very critical stage of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update. Thank you in advance for considering our concerns.

- 1) After discussions amongst HAATF members who were in attendance at the Tuesday, February 2nd Planning Commission meeting, it is very apparent that there existed a major communication disconnect about what we were to present that evening. We apologize for any role we may have played in that confusion. We would like to avoid communication issues in the future as well as get the air cleared. Dan and Joan would like to meet with both of you to make sure we are on the same page in regards to the schedule you sent us and what we can do to prepare for these discussions.
- 2) The February 5 email from Rebecca clearly states that changing land use regulations is not part of the Comp Plan Update. How can we be assured that any changes will actually be made to the Zoning Code and Land Use rules so that the Goals and Objectives in the 2016 Comp Plan Update can be realized? After reviewing the codes and the land use rules in regards to the goals and objectives set for multifamily housing, and drawing up some sample building pro-formas, we do not see how developers are being encouraged to build multifamily in Mount Vernon. Are there actions you are taking outside of the Comp Plan process to address the housing shortage? Can we have a discussion with you about starting with the end in mind and working backwards through the process?
- 3) We want to make sure that there is ample time to make our case in front of the Planning Commission and after that, the City Council.
 - A) The statement in the February 5 email that staff "hope" to have a public hearing in front of the Planning Commission leaves us with some concerns about whether or not there will be a public hearing in front of the Planning Commission. We expect a major turnout for any public hearing dealing with the availability and affordability of housing. We would like to confirm the schedule with you.
 - B) We sent a letter to Bob in December of 2015 requesting a study session with the City Council and the Planning Commission regarding the housing crisis and we have not heard back on our invitation.
 - C) We suggest that a hearing dealing strictly with the Housing Element be scheduled so that there will be ample time to obtain as much public testimony as possible. On the schedule you attached to the February 5 email, it appears there will be no public hearing on housing with the Planning Commission. The only public hearing for housing is with the City Council on June 8 which is only weeks away from the June 30 deadline. We strongly encourage you to create an opportunity to work through this issue with the greater public sooner.

Many lives are negatively impacted everyday by our housing shortage, and economic opportunities are lost. We appreciate your leadership in working with us to help remedy the situation. We really are here to help and not to hinder your work.

HAATF- Dan Mitzel, John Mitzel, Melanie Corey, Charlie Guildner, Paul Woodmansee, Joan Penney, Dick Nord, Gene VanSelus, Carl Young, Tom Thiesen, and Jim Vandermey.

Lowell, Rebecca

From: Lowell, Rebecca
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 4:21 PM
To: jmpenney59@comcast.net; Dan Mitzel
Cc: Hyde, Bob
Subject: Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan Update
Attachments: Comp Plan 2016 adoption schedule.pdf

Hello:

I wanted to provide you with advance notice of the meetings and hearings that staff will be having with our Planning Commission and City Council up through the end of June. The attached schedule is, however, subject to change depending on how the first several meetings go.

With regard to housing issues staff plans on briefing the Planning Commission on March 15th on existing conditions housing information. On May 3rd staff hopes to have a public hearing before the Planning Commission that will include, among other items, the Housing Element. On June 8th staff hopes to have a public hearing before the City Council that will, among other items, include the Housing Element.

While your taskforce is welcome to present/testify at the scheduled hearings with whatever you deem appropriate please be advised that the Comprehensive Plan process does not include amending the City's development regulations (e.g. the zoning code). I am mentioning this because many of the comments that your group has made to-date are code, not policy issues. The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that establishes a vision for the City by creating goals, objectives and policies. After this policy framework is adopted staff can then bring forward amendments to development regulations - if warranted.

Please do let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I am hopeful that we can work together in a productive manner that will result in an updated Housing Element that supports the entire community's vision for Mount Vernon.

Thank you,

Rebecca Bradley-Lowell
Senior Planner
Community & Economic Development Department
910 Cleveland Ave / P.O. Box 809
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
360.336.6214



2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE MEETING/HEARING SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	BEFORE	TOPICS
March 1, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Statement • Buildable Lands • Land Use Element • Transportation Element
March 15, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Economic Development • Capital Facilities • Health & Wellness
April 5, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Meeting	Follow up on any items from March 1 st or 15 th
April 19, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Statement • Buildable Lands • Land Use Element • Transportation Element
May 3, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Economic Development • Capital Facilities • Health & Wellness
May 25, 2016	7 PM	City Council Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Statement • Buildable Lands • Land Use Element • Transportation Element
June 8, 2016	7 PM	City Council Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Economic Development • Capital Facilities • Health & Wellness
June 22, 2016	7 PM	City Council Hearing	Follow up on any items from May 25 th or June 8 th